

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8889

UNCLAS TANANARIVE 0318

DEPT ALSO FOR AID/W

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EAID, MA

SUBJECT: SERIOUS FLOODING IN MADAGASCAR

1. AS RESULT OF CYCLONE "EMILIE", WHICH STRUCK THE BIG RED ISLE FEBRUARY 2, THERE HAS BEEN SERIOUS FLOODING IN FOUR MAJOR AREAS OF MADAGASCAR. THIS WILL POSSIBLY RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES TO (A) HELP DISPLACED VICTIMS, (B) REPAIR ENGINEERING WORKS THAT HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY THE FLOODS, (C) CONSTRUCT NEW WORKS TO GUARD AGAINST FURTHER FLOODS, AND (D) PAY FOR ADDITIONAL RICE IMPORTS.

2. THE FOUR AREAS BADLY HIT WERE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY AROUND TANANARIVE, MORONDAVA (ON THE CENTRAL WEST COAST, WHERE 1,000 HECTARES OF RICE LAND ARE UNDER WATER AND THEREBY RUINED), THE RICH RICE LAND AROUND MAROVOAY (NEAR MAJUNGA ON THE NORTHWEST COAST), AND THE EAST COAST AREA BETWEEN NOSY-VARIKA AND MANANJARY. FORTUNATELY, THE LAKE ALAOTRA AREA NORTHEAST OF TANANARIVE, WHICH ALONG WITH MAROVOAY ARE THE TWO RICHEST RICE LANDS IN MADAGASCAR, WAS NOT TOUCHED.

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3. OVER 7,000 FAMILIES HAVE HAD TO BE EVACUATED IN THE TANANARIVE AREA ALONE. SINCE THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 12, A FLOOD ALERT HAS EXISTED IN TANANARIVE BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES FEAR THAT THE HUGE DIKE WHICH RUNS ALONG THE NORTHWEST EDGE OF GREATER TANANARIVE MAY GIVE WAY AND THEREFORE FLOOD

THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE CITY. THIS AREA INCLUDES THE AMPEFILOHA SCHOOL COMPLEX NEAR THE HILTON HOTEL, MOST GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, AND AN EVER-EXPANDING RESIDENTIAL AREA BUILT SINCE THE DIKES WERE ERECTED FOLLOWING THE DISASTEROUS FLOOD OF 1959. CURRENT FLOOD WATERS ARE PUTTING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON DIKES, DAMS AND BRIDGES AND, AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE WILL PROBABLY BE NEED FOR NOT ONLY REGULAR MAINTENANCE BUT REINFORCEMENT OF EXISTING STRUCTURES ONCE THE RAINY SEASON IS OVER (APRIL OR MAY).

3. THESE INUNDATIONS, WHICH ARE THE WORST FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, CAME AT A PARTICULARLY INCONVENIENT TIME SINCE ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF THE RICE BEING PRODUCED IN THE CURRENT CROP HAD BEEN HARVESTED AND IN TWO TO FOUR WEEKS THE REST WOULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN.SHEINBAUM

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